

THE

HISTORIAN

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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

January 1999

JANUARY HAPPENINGS

The January Meeting of the Hancock County Historical Society will be held at noon on Thursday, January 21, 1999 at the Kate Lobrano House, Bay St. Louis.

Our guest will be Shana Walton from the University of Southern Mississippi's Oral History Department. Her interview tapes are frequently heard on Mississippi Public Radio and we are looking forward to hearing her in person.

Call 467-4090 for luncheon reservations at \$6.00. Please call early to assure your reservation and to help us plan seating.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We now begin a very important year in our history – our three hundredth. We are planning festive moments and monuments to mark this occasion. *The Historian* will begin with this issue carrying excerpts from Iberville's Journal covering each month's record of his voyage to the Gulf and his explorations during 1699.

Background Information on the Voyage

In 1682 the French explorer, René Robert Cavelier (commonly called La Salle) had sailed down the Mississippi River from Canada into the Gulf of Mexico and claimed all of the land affected by the river for France. However, his subsequent attempt to reach the mouth of the Mississippi River through the Gulf of Mexico ended in tragedy and shipwreck near Galveston, Texas.

See President page 3



The French Ships at Anchor

THE VOYAGE OF LE MARIN Part One of a 1999 Series

In observance of the 300th anniversary of the founding of Bay St. Louis, *The Historian* will retrace the route of *Le Marin*, the ship of Sieur Pierre LeMoyne d'Iberville, as it led five vessels under the French flag to our coast in 1699.

Each month a selection from *Le Marin* ship's log will be reprinted (in English translation). The squadron of ships journeyed 3 1/2 months across the Atlantic to reach our shores. We join *Le Marin* in January as the vessels approached the North American

continent.

Thursday, the 1st of January, in the year 1699, at one in the morning, we set out under full sails, in a direction west to quarter-northwest, before a fair and fresh northwest wind, to catch up with the other ships ahead of us. Around nine in the morning, *Le Francois* fired a gun across from the small Goave to signal to an officer who had gone there, he soon came aboard. We stayed becalmed until half past eight, when we endeavored under full sail to catch up with those ahead of us. Around ten o'clock

Monsieur d'Iberville sent the biscayenne to Nippe to advise the small traversier that he had some refreshments. Toward five *La Badine* [under the command of Sieur Jean Baptiste LeMoyne d'Bienville] fired a cannon-shot to signal to her traversier and to the biscayenne. All day we had to cope with variable winds, often getting almost becalmed; we continually bore down on *Le Francois* under small sail...finding ourselves too near the cape of the Caymans, we loosened our foresail and our two topsails so as to get farther from land.

Monday the 5th at six in the morning, we were in position south-southwest of the end of Cuba and north-northwest of Cape Dalmarie. *Le Francois* under full sails arrived near us and under the wind, she put athwart in front of *Le Badine*, which held to the wind so as to speak to her. Afterward she waited for the great traversier which was far behind us and to which she gave a tow. *Le Badine* shouted for us to do likewise in the case of the small one. After that we crowded sails to take advantage of a light northeast wind; we then noticed that the currents were causing us to drift south. At sunset the Cape furthest east from Post de Palms was fifteen leagues northwest to quarter west, and the point furthest east twelve leagues to northeast quarter north, the center of the bay is directly northwest and the furthest point west of the Island of Saint-Dominique twenty leagues to southwest. All night winds have blown from the east and the northeast, both fair and fresh; we have set our course west to quarter northwest.

Wednesday the 14th, we crowded sails at about six in the morning, with a wind blowing northwest, the cape being north-northwest. Around eight o'clock in the morning, we sighted land, it happened to be the point farthest east of Cape Corientes, about ten leagues north-northeast from us. It is extremely low land, not a tree is to be seen when only three leagues from

it, but far in the distance one discerns the outline of several mountains. We bore a way to northwest and to west north west to find the western end of said Cape Corientes, which laid, around three o'clock about a league from us to the north-northwest. We ranged along the coast because of some low land extending some fine leagues out. It looks like an island, only its tips and the land to the northwest being discernible, it is so flat that only the trees are to be seen because of a great depression existing towards east-northeast.

Monday, the 19th, at noon, till noon on Tuesday, the 20th, the winds did not change. Toward five o'clock we met a fog, it stayed with us for three hours. Towards nine in the morning, we sounded without finding bottom, and were almost becalmed. Soon a fog came out to the north-east, and gusts of wind blew around all at once, this caused us to have to take in the reefs of our topsails, this weather lasted through to the afternoon. Our estimated program has been 26 degrees, 54 minutes; in distance 20 leagues.

Monday, the 26th, around six in the morning, the same east winds prevailed, also the fog. Toward nine o'clock we sighted a very low cape, west of which there seemed to be a pass, in which were anchored two ships. An hour later, the fog got thicker and thicker, *Le Francois* fired five gun-shots signal for us to anchor in ten brasses, fine sandy bottom. We fired several musket-shots to signal the traversiers, who fired likewise, in fear that they would pull away from us in the fog. The two ships we had seen in the lake fired two cannon-shots and sent over a chaloupe to find out who we were. She came within half a league from us and put back when we hoisted our pavilion. All night the winds blew east, the weather was fine, but with a very thick fog.

Tuesday the 27th, Monsieur de Lesquelet, lieutenant of *La Badine*, went to look over the two frigates. They were Spanish ships, one of eighteen and the other of twenty cannons they had been there four months trying to establish a

colony. Their commanders received him very well. He told them that the King had heard that five or six hundred Canadians had come down to seize the mines and that we had been sent down to arrest them, that we had captured these two traversiers, who were pirate ships, and that having been told by them that there was another one of some fifty to sixty pieces, *Le Francois*, who was at Saint-Dominique, had joined us, that we wanted to take on wood and water and that it was necessary for us to enter. The commandant said that he had orders not to let any one enter, but nevertheless he allowed Monsieur de Lesquelet to come in, and the major and his chaloupe came back. In getting clear we fired three cannon-shots as a salute. They have a fort made of stake-posts, and they number about three hundred men, they have with them two Augustines and two Recollets. Monsieur de Lesquelet and the Spanish Major came aboard the *Francois*, about two in the afternoon, with a few presents for Monsieur the Marquis de Chasteaumarant who sent them back with a few demi-johns of wine. The major went back to his post, and we fired seven cannon shots as a salute.

Wednesday the 28th the canots (ship-boats) from our three ships went to sound at the entrance of the river named by the Spaniards Sante-Marie de Galves de Pensacola. They found a very fine harbor, the least water was twenty feet, according to reports made by Messieurs Surgeres and d'Iberville, who went there themselves. Around noon a chaloupe from the two frigates, in which was the captain went alongside the *Francois*, bearer of an order forbidding us to enter. We had already lifted anchor but let it drop right back then. They said we had only to anchor at the entrance and they would fetch both wood and water to us; their sailors told the men of the *Francois* that it was

feared that we had come along the coast to establish ourselves there. Our officers decided it a good policy to pass on yonder. It is certainly a fine harbor, at least as good as that of Brest (in Brittany) and we lost a chance at it on account of our coming too late. There are enough fine trees there to supply with masts all of France. Around six in the evening we hauled our chaloupe aboard, regretting to have to leave such a fine spot.

From *A Chapter From Memoirs & Documents* by Pierre Margry. Translated by Henri de Ville Du Sinclair.

MISSISSIPPI HISTORICAL

President from page 1

He wandered eastward by land, trying to find the elusive river. His men eventually mutinied and murdered him and only a few of the expedition made their way back to Canada.

Meanwhile, Henri de Tonti, one of La Salle's lieutenants, had heard of the disaster and came down the river from the north search for him. Failing to find him, he made his way back up the river, but not before leaving a now-famous letter to La Salle with an Indian tribe living along the river just above present-day New Orleans. La Salle would never live to read the letter... but Iberville did.

In 1698, Louis XIV offered Iberville an assignment to find the mouth of the Mississippi River through the Gulf of Mexico route. On board his three-ship expedition were men to build and inhabit a fort, supplies for the fort and also cattle, hogs and other livestock.

We hope the excerpts from the journal of Iberville's ship, *La Marin* which are recorded elsewhere in this paper as well as in the issues that will follow, will help you better understand the lives of those who preceded us by three hundred years.

Thanks to all who called to inquire about my health during December. I regret that I was forced to accept a diminished schedule because of a kidney stone but my screams bothered people doing research at Lobrano House.

All is quiet once more so "come on down". We need you.

Charles H. Gray

SOCIETY WILL HOLD COAST MEETINGS

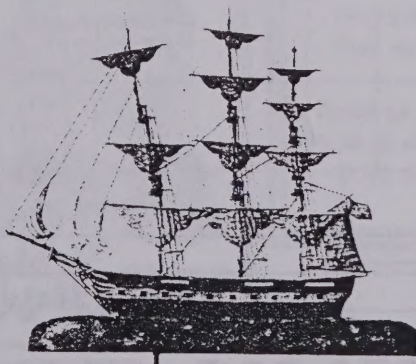
Members of the Hancock County Historical Society will have the opportunity to hear presentations by national and international historians when the Mississippi Historical Society holds its annual meeting in Biloxi March 3 - 6, 1999.

The meeting, which will be in the Biloxi Grand's new Bayview Hotel facility, is being held in conjunction with the Coast-wide 1699 Tricentennial celebration. All of the presentations will relate to the French connection with the area.

There is no registration fee to attend any of the plenary sessions. However, there will be a meal cost to attend the Thursday noon luncheon and Friday evening banquet.

Guest lecturers from France and Canada will join speakers from institutions of higher learning including Cornell University, University of Wisconsin, Harvard University, College of Charleston, and University of New Orleans.

Donald Dana, Jr. of Long Beach is currently serving as President of the Mississippi Historical Society and is expected to attend the next meeting of the Hancock County Historical Society and extend an invitation to its members to attend the Society's meeting.



LE MARIN

Reminders

If your dues are due, there should be an envelope in this copy of your *Historian*. Also, your expiration date is printed on your mailing address label.

We still have bricks for sale for the Tercentenary Park. See order form.

We have copies of our book, *Celebrating The First 300 Years*.

NEW MEMBERS

Lionel Bourgeois, Waveland, Ms
L. Michael Caraway, Bay Saint Louis
Frances S. Keifer, Austin, Tx
Lynn N. Johnston, Starkville, Ms
Aubry T. Little, Baton Rouge, La
Tom DuPont, Carriere, Ms

LOBRANO HOUSE HOURS

MONDAY	10 a.m.
through	to
FRIDAY	3 p.m.

THE

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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

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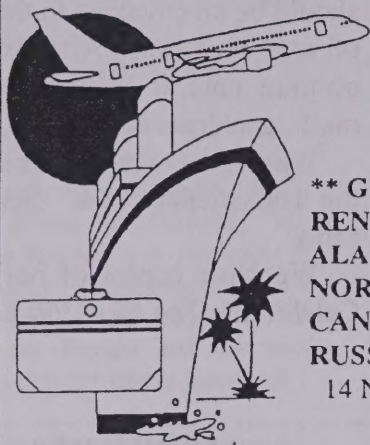
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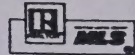
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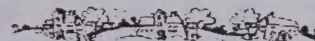
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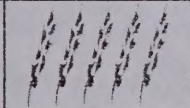
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